

that we could make to help women, while ensuring the costs will not affect Social Security's ability to make benefit benefits in the long-term. I have found three provisions that, while modest in terms of overall impact, represent real help for just over 120,000 women when implemented. Today these provisions are being introduced as the Social Security Benefit Enhancements for Women Act of 2002.

These provisions increase benefits for certain widows, allow more disabled widows to qualify for disabled widow benefits, and enable certain divorced spouses to receive benefits sooner. These enhancements are particularly necessary, because elderly and disabled widows and divorced spouses are more likely to live in poverty.

Back in December, virtually all the Members of the House of Representatives voted to save Social Security soon, without benefit cuts or tax increases. I sincerely hope that by coming together to enhance benefits for women, we will build further consensus that will help us make the progress that is so desperately toward our larger commitment of saving Social Security for our kids and grandkids. We must not allow shortsightedness and election-year politics come between us and this goal; otherwise, our kids and grandkids will pay the price.

TRIBUTE TO MISSION, KANSAS,  
MAYOR SYLVESTER POWELL

HON. DENNIS MOORE

OF KANSAS

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, March 20, 2002

Mr. MOORE. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to pay tribute to Mayor Sylvester Powell, of Mission, Kansas, who died on March 6th, at the age of 82. Sylvester Powell served as mayor of his northeast Johnson County community, which is located in the Third Congressional District, from 1955–65 and from 1977 until his death.

Sylvester Powell was born on May 12, 1919, in Springfield, Ohio. He was drafted into the Army in March 1941, and after the bombing of Pearl Harbor, entered Officer's Candidate School. He was commissioned as a second lieutenant and eventually attained the rank of captain. He served as a company commander in General George Patton's Third Army during the war. While in the Army, he met his future wife, Merle Cline, and they were married on July 21, 1943. Mayor Powell is survived by Merle, their son, Stephen, and their daughters, Janet and Dianne.

After leaving the Army and receiving an undergraduate degree from Wittenberg College, Sylvester attended law school at the University of Kansas City [now the University of Missouri-Kansas City], graduating in 1949. He was to practice law for the next 47 years, representing defendants in personal injury litigation.

The Powells moved to Mission in 1951, where he helped write the city charter that year, which established the city limits. Sylvester was elected to the city council in 1953 and was first elected mayor in 1955. As the Johnson County Sun recently noted: "Through Powell's tenure, Mission grew from a sleepy community to the vital retail area it is today. Many improvements were made to the city's

infrastructure during the Powell years. But perhaps Powell's greatest legacy was the \$8 million Sylvester Powell, Jr., Community Center, which opened in May 1999 . . . The almost 3-year-old community center was an instant success and surprised both detractors and backers by covering its operational expenses."

I knew Syl personally. As a lawyer and a public official he was truly outstanding. But most of all, Syl was a good friend who will be missed by his friends and his community.

Mr. Speaker, I am taking this opportunity to place in the RECORD two recent pieces from the Kansas City Star regarding Mayor Sylvester Powell: an obituary that the paper carried on March 7th and a column by Mike Hendricks, reflecting the character and ability of the man whom we knew as "Syl," that the Star carried on the following day. I am proud to have known Sylvester Powell. As the Johnson County Sun said in a March 6th editorial: "People often wonder what one person can do. Syl Powell showed them." My only regret is that we will not soon see his kind in public service again.

[From the Kansas City Star, Mar. 7, 2002]

SYLVESTER POWELL JR., LONGTIME MAYOR OF MISSION, DIES AT 82

(By James Hart and Grace Hobson)

Mission Mayor Sylvester Powell Jr., who helped build the town he loved into a prosperous suburb, died Wednesday night. He was 82.

A World War II veteran and Kansas City trial lawyer, Powell was regarded by many as the dean of Kansas mayors. He served Mission in that capacity between 1955 and 1965, took a "12-year vacation" and returned to office in 1977, winning every election for the post since then, most recently in 2001.

"The people don't put somebody back in office that many times unless he's well-respected," said Police Chief Bob Sturm, who worked with Powell for more than 30 years.

Powell had suffered lung problems and had been hospitalized for weeks, Sturm said. The mayor loved his city, Sturm said, the way he loved his family and his church.

Officials in the city of nearly 10,000 will ask residents to lower their flags to half-staff today. A memorial service has not yet been scheduled.

Powell was fond of telling others how, when he first became mayor in 1955, Johnson Drive was a two-lane road and the city had an operating budget of about \$38,000.

He was elected to the City Council in 1953, and one of his first acts as a public official was to help place a traffic light at the intersection of Nall Avenue and Johnson Drive—a project he researched himself by recording traffic with a stopwatch.

Several decades and more than a few traffic lights later, Mission stands as a model municipality with a vibrant downtown and a solid tax base. Some of Powell's proudest accomplishments included his work to help with the development of Mission Center Mall, Johnson Drive's success as a retail area and construction of the community center that today bears his name.

"I like that little city and seeing progress made," Powell once said of Mission.

The secret behind the city's success, most people agreed, was the gruff trial lawyer who served as mayor. Powell, known as "Syl" around town, liked to visit the Mission City Hall every morning when he didn't have an appearance in court.

"He's a person who . . . takes a stand and says, 'OK, this is what we're going to do,'" Westwood Mayor Bill Kostar said in February.

While some critics said Powell held the city's reins too tightly, he clearly was in control of city government during his tenure.

The city did not hire a professional administrator until last year, after a consultant recommended the move.

"I don't think they're going to find anybody who can run the city better than I do," Powell said in 2000.

Last year, the city's management became a campaign issue in Powell's first election challenge since 1985, and he pledged to hire a professional.

City Councilman Lloyd Thomas, who has served since 1976, said Mission's strong financial position today was the result of Powell's control over the city's finances throughout the years.

"That's what you call being frugal," Thomas said recently. "He spends the taxpayers' money just like he does his own. He's very frugal with it."

Powell was able to build the city's sales tax base with development projects that didn't sacrifice Mission's small-town feel, Kostar said. That's a formula other mayors in northeast Johnson County want to emulate, he added.

Asked once why he stayed in office so long, Powell said: "Sometimes I think about retiring, but it's like giving up something dear to you. If you're running the city well, they ought to keep you in."

Councilwoman Laura McConwell will become Mission's new mayor.

[From the Kansas City Star, Mar. 8, 2002]

LUCKY FOR MISSION, MAYOR WAS TOUGH

(By Mike Hendricks)

When I read Syl Powell's obituary yesterday, the first thing that came to mind was the time he hijacked the Olympic torch.

No single act better defined the longtime mayor of Mission and the hardball politics he practiced, a style we don't see much of anymore.

It was 1996, the year of the Atlanta Games. Metropolitan Kansas City was to be part of the symbolic torch run. But the original route bypassed much of Mission, the northeast Johnson County town of 10,000 Powell had watched over like the overprotective father of a teen-age daughter.

The idea was for runners to cut through Mission on a short stretch of Shawnee Mission Parkway, but there wasn't going to be much chance for the city's residents to see it.

Powell had an idea. What if the torch run made a detour down Mission's main street, Johnson Drive?

"The torch is something we may not get a chance to see again, and I thought the people of Mission should be able to see it," Powell said at the time.

Naturally, Olympics officials blew him off. There was an international organization. Who was Powell but mayor of some pip-squeak town in the Kansas City suburbs?

Talk about a miscalculation. When the Olympics officials failed to respond to Powell's polite request, he turned Don Corleone and made an offer they couldn't refuse. Then he embarrassed them by letting the world know.

"I said, 'I hate to do this, but whether you like it or not, you're going to come down Johnson Drive . . . I'm going to barricade (Shawnee Mission Parkway) with public works, and you won't have a choice.'"

A threatened Olympic blockade? Sure enough, they changed the route.

It recalled the time Powell vowed to pull Mission out of the Mission Chamber of Commerce if the organization changed its name.

Powell liked to have his way—and sometimes he played rough to get it.

Some called the Olympic torch threat self-centered, childish, an embarrassment.

Yes. Sure. Exactly. And it was bloody marvelous, too.

Not only did the power play illuminate Powell's character, but it was the kind of leadership we miss so much in local politics these days. Strong and uncompromising.

Of course, Powell was no T.J. Pendergast and no one ever questioned his honesty or accused him of accepting a payoff. But in his way, he was as tough as Boss Tom, a rarity in an era when most local politicians would rather get along than get their way for the benefit of the community.

There are a lot of wimps out there. I'd like to think that if Sylvester Powell Jr. had been mayor of Kansas City rather than Mission all these years, there'd have been a whole lot less hand-wringing downtown.

Cantankerous, shrewd, arrogant and big-hearted, that was Powell. He insisted on building a Cadillac of a community center for his constituents. And he saw to it that his name was on it.

I once labeled Powell Mission's "mayor for life." He was that. Thirty-five of the last 47 years, he was Mission's chief executive. Critics deplored his overbearing style. But when he died Wednesday at the age of 82, few residents of his tidy little town had called anyone else Hizzoner.

By the way, when the Olympic torch came through here this year, I noticed that the route through Johnson County came nowhere near the Mission city limits.

Probably just a coincidence.

## PEACE AND NUCLEAR DISARMAMENT: A CALL TO ACTION

**HON. DENNIS J. KUCINICH**

OF OHIO

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

*Wednesday, March 20, 2002*

Mr. KUCINICH. Mr. Speaker, in this time of national crisis, it is important for all those who love our country to speak out. I offer these thoughts in a spirit of reconciliation.

"... Come my friends, 'tis not too late to seek a newer world," ...—Alfred Lord Tennyson.

If you believe that humanity has a higher destiny, if you believe we are all ultimately perfectable, if you believe we can evolve, and become better than we are; if you believe we can overcome the nihilistic scourge of war and someday fulfill the dream of peace and harmony on earth, let us begin the conversation today. Let us exchange our ideas. Let us plan together, act together and create peace together. This is a call for common sense, for peaceful, nonviolent citizen action to protect our precious world from widening war and from stumbling into a nuclear catastrophe. The climate for conflict has intensified, with the struggle between Pakistan and India, the China-Taiwan tug of war, and the increased bloodshed between Israel and the Palestinians.

United States' troop deployments in the Philippines, Yemen, Georgia, Columbia and Indonesia create new possibilities for expanded war. An invasion of Iraq is planned. The recent disclosure that Russia, China, Iraq, Iran, Syria, North Korea, and Libya are considered by the United States as possible targets for nuclear attack catalyzes potential conflicts everywhere.

These crucial political decisions promoting increased military actions, plus a new nuclear first-use policy, are occurring without the consent of the American people, without public debate, without public hearings, without public votes. The President is taking Congress's approval of responding to the Sept. 11 terrorists as a license to flirt with nuclear war.

"Politics ought to stay out of fighting a war," the President has been quoted as saying on March 13th 2002. Yet Article 1, Section 8 of the United States Constitution explicitly requires that Congress take responsibility when it comes to declaring war. This President is very popular, according to the polls. But polls are not a substitute for democratic process. Attributing a negative connotation here to politics or dismissing constitutionally mandated congressional oversight belies reality:

Spending \$400 billion a year for defense is a political decision. Committing troops abroad is a political decision. War is a political decision.

When men and women die on the battlefield that is the result of a political decision. The use of nuclear weapons, which can end the lives of millions, is a profound political decision. In a monarchy there need be no political decisions.

In a democracy, all decisions are political, in that they derive from the consent of the governed.

In a democracy, budgetary military and national objectives must be subordinate to the political process. Before we celebrate an imperial presidency, let it be said that the lack of free and open political process, the lack of free and open political debate, and the lack of free and open political dissent can be fatal in a democracy.

We have reached a moment in our country's history where it is urgent that people everywhere speak out as president of his or her own life, to protect the peace of the nation and world within and without.

We should speak out and caution leaders who generate fear through talk of the endless war or the final conflict.

We should appeal to our leaders to consider their own bellicose thoughts, words and deeds are reshaping consciousness and can have an adverse effect on our nation.

Because when one person thinks: fight! he or she finds a fight. One faction thinks: war! and starts a war. One nation, thinks: nuclear! and approaches the abyss.

Neither individuals nor nations exist in a vacuum, which is why we have a serious responsibility for each other in this world. It is also urgent that we find those places of war in our own lives, and begin healing the world through healing ourselves. Each of us is a citizen of a common planet, bound to a common destiny. So connected are we, that each of us has the power to be the eyes of the world, the voice of the world, the conscience of the world, or the end of the world. And as each one of us chooses, so becomes the world.

Each of us is architect of this world. Our thoughts, the concepts. Our words, the designs. Our deeds, the bricks and mortar of our daily lives. Which is why we should always take care to regard the power of our thoughts and words, and the commands they send into action through time and space.

Some of our leaders have been thinking and talking about nuclear war. In the past week there has been much news about a planning

document which describes how and when America might wage nuclear war. The Nuclear Posture Review recently released to the media by the government:

1. Assumes that the United States has the right to launch a pre-emptive nuclear strike.

2. Equates nuclear weapons with conventional weapons.

3. Attempts to minimize the consequences of the use of nuclear weapons.

4. Promotes nuclear response to a chemical or biological attack.

Some dismiss this review as routine government planning. But it becomes ominous when taken in the context of a war on terrorism which keeps expanding its boundaries, rhetorically and literally.

The President equates the "war on terrorism" with World War II. He expresses a desire to have the nuclear option "on the table." He unilaterally withdraws from the ABM treaty. He seeks \$8.9 billion to fund deployment of a missile shield. He institutes, without congressional knowledge, a shadow government in a bunker outside our nation's Capitol. He tries to pass off as arms reduction, the storage of, instead of the elimination of, nuclear weapons.

Two generations ago we lived with nuclear nightmares. We feared and hated the Russians who feared and hated us. We feared and hated the "godless, atheistic" communists. In our schools, we dutifully put our head between our legs and practiced duck-and-cover drills. In our nightmares, we saw the long, slow arc of a Soviet missile flash into our very neighborhood.

We got down on our knees and prayed for peace. We surveyed, wide eyed, pictures of the destruction of Nagasaki and Hiroshima. We supported the elimination of all nuclear weapons. We knew that if you "nuked" others you "nuked" yourself.

The splitting of the atom for destructive purposes admits a split consciousness, the compartmentalized thinking of Us vs. Them, the dichotomized thinking, which spawns polarity and leads to war. The proposed use of nuclear weapons, pollutes the psyche with the arrogance of infinite power. It creates delusions of domination of matter and space.

It is dehumanizing through its calculations of mass casualties. We must overcome doomthinkers and sayers who invite a world descending, disintegrating into a nuclear disaster. With a world at risk, we must find the bombs in our own lives and disarm them. We must listen to that quiet inner voice which counsels that the survival of all is achieved through the unity of all.

The same powerful humanity expressed by any one of us expresses itself through each of us. We must overcome our fear of each other, by seeking out the humanity within each of us. The human heart contains every possibility of race, creed, language, religion, and politics. We are one in our commonalities. Must we always fear our differences? We can overcome our fears by not feeding our fears with more war and nuclear confrontations. We must ask our leaders to unify us in courage.

We need to create a new, clear vision of a world as one. A new, clear vision of people working out their differences peacefully. A new, clear vision with the teaching of non-violence, nonviolent intervention, and mediation.